

REMARKS

The Office Action dated March 26, 2008 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments and following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Claims 1-3 are pending, and claims 4-12 are withdrawn in this application. By this amendment, claims 1, 4 and 8-9 are amended. Support for the subject matter of the amendment to the claims can be found in the specification at, for example, Tables 2, 4 and 6, page 17, lines 1-8, or page 41, lines 1-9. Reconsideration of the rejection of the claims is respectfully requested.

The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that claim 2 contains allowable subject matter.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) / 103(a) over Caren et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,029,442) in light of Evans et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,479,023). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, the above-identified application claims a process for decreasing the content of a particulate material contained in an exhaust gas from a lean burn engine, comprising the steps of heating the exhaust gas at a temperature greater than 70° C, generating plasma, and then oxidizing the particulate material, wherein a decrement rate of the particulate material is greater than 84%, as recited in independent claim 1.

Caren teaches an apparatus and a method for the reduction of pollutants in the exhaust stream of a combustion engine (Abstract). Caren further teaches using a corona discharge device to generate a reaction in the exhaust gas that produces

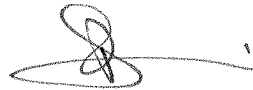
highly oxidizing free radicals, and that a catalytic converter 13 located at the underbody of an automobile and situated in the exhaust gas stream 18 from the engine, includes any device provided for treating exhaust gases from the combustion of a fuel such as gasoline or any other fuel where a catalytic converter can be used to reduce at least one pollutant from combustion (column 4, line 66 - column 5, line 17; column 7, line 53 - column 8, line 13; column 10, lines 16-46). However, and as already argued in the December 12, 2007, response, Caren fails to disclose or suggest that a decrement rate of the particulate material is greater than 84%.

Evans teaches a system for converting particulate matter in exhaust gases (Abstract), but fails to cure the above-discussed deficiencies in Caren in disclosing or rendering obvious the features of independent claim 1. Thus, independent claim 1, and its dependent claim 3, are patentable over a combination of the applied references. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) / 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner determine that any further action is necessary to place this application into better form, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned representative at the number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension, together with any additional fees that may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to counsel's Deposit Account No. 01-2300, **referencing Attorney Dkt. No. 017348-00389.**

Respectfully submitted,



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